6: Joseph E-5 (1965-1966) 1975 MX3 Rif MX3

Chapter 1

SOCIAL HISTORY

133 The Rif is a chain of rugged mountains stretching along the Mediterranean coastline from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Moulouya River. Composed almost entirely of sedimentary and metamorphic rock, it is an extension of the Cordillera Penibotica of Spain. While the mountains are somewhat lower than those of the Atlas, they are just as steep. The invaders of Morocco invariably skirted the Rif and proceeded through the Taza Corridor. If the mountains are foreboding, the coastline is no less so. [504] The entire stretch from Río Martin to Melilla is devoid of ship shelter except for the break in the bay of Alhucemas, the small cove at Puerto Capaz, and the deltas of Wad Lao, Rhis, Nekor, and Bados.

133 131 The area which will be discussed is located in the center of this mountain chain in what is now called the Province of Alhucemas. The Tamazight-speakers of this region lived, until very recently, in a social and economic backwash. The presence of a rugged, inaccessible coast isolated them from Mediterranean contact except for the few points mentioned above. The mountain chain, on the other hand, served as an effective barrier to the interior of the country. The Rif was thus isolated from the rest of Morocco by natural boundaries. The social and political consequences of this shall be discussed below.

633 [504] The area is administered today from the small port and provincial capital of Alhucemas. The growth of this urban center, fishing port, and tourist attraction is but a recent [175] phenomenon. The city, founded in 1925 with the invasion of a Spanish fleet, has been the focal point for whatever innovation that has occurred in the Central Rif in this century.

133 361 Directly behind the city of Alhucemas is a flat plain. Although the land here is rich it was uninhabited prior to the Spanish because the terrain was indefensible during times of feuds. The original population was situated in the foothills [712] and higher mountains. Here homesteads were scattered and since they also served as garrisons or fortresses they were located on hills or ridges which could be defended militarily.

133 The area is not well served by rivers, the principal ones being the Rhis and the Nekor. The former rises in the Sonhaja area and empties into the Mediterranean at Alhucemas. The latter starts in Igzinnayen territory to flow along the border of the Beni Wariyaghar and the Beni Tuzin, emptying into the bay at [312] [161] Alhucemas. Both these rivers and their tributaries are used for irrigation and the population density is higher along them. There are also a good many natural springs (generally regarded as holy sites) and wells have been successfully dug in some of the valleys.

132 Rainfall varies annually and at times disastrously. At the weather station in Alhucemas during the decade 1946-1955, rainfall ranged from 8.5 inches to 16.9 inches. Although the

442 Rif, such multiplicity of roles does not turn up empirically and
443 we may proceed to regard the one as different from the other.
472 Of the large-scale sellers in the markets, the fish trade
[262] has become the most prominent, selling a commodity which, though
cheaper than meat, serves as an important dietary item. Alhucemas
226 has only recently become a prominent fishing port, currently
[504] rivaled by only Agadir on the Atlantic. The fishing occupation,
[178] while pursued by the Thimsamen and Ibuqquyen tribes for several
[648] centuries, has only recently been modernized. During the Spanish
protectorate this activity was mainly in the hands of Spaniards
but ever-increasing numbers from the two above tribes have entered
442 into this occupation. The fishermen themselves do not market
443 their catch but, after spending the night out at sea, bring the
472 catch to the docks where middlemen bargain for it. These men,
438 in turn, supply every market in the Central Rif with fish on the
appropriate day of each market. Such an enterprise is usually
carried on by a company of several men who band together to buy
a truck and split the rewards in common. Prior to the building
of roads this enterprise was conducted on a very small scale by
entrepreneurs who traveled into the interior on mules. At present
[262] the activity has picked up to the extent that every market gets
two or three loads of fish, mainly sardines which are the cheapest
fish available and take the place of meat in the diets of the
poor.

443 Another group of large-scale sellers who come to the local
442 <u>suqs</u> are the barley merchants who purchase grain in the richer
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7: Mikesell K-4,5 (1955-1957) 1961 MX3 Rif MX3

applied to this zone, which includes northern Morocco's highest mountains and principal watershed.[3] Adrar[4] Tidighin, highest of the Sanhajan mountains, rises to 2,456 meters and is snow-capped during six months of the year (plate 1, *b*).

Margins of the Rif Chain

From Bab Taza northward the karstic mountains of Bani Hassan form the principal arc of the Rif chain. West of this range the highland complex consists of a series of outliers trending northwest to southeast. Several of these ridges are more than 1,000 meters in elevation, and the highest peaks, Jbil Sugna and Jbil Buhashim, exceed 1,500 meters. A line drawn from Tangier to a point about 30 kilometers east of Ksar al-Kebir marks the division between the Rif highlands and the hills and terraces of the Atlantic littoral.[5]

The eastern margin of the Rif highlands is difficult to delimit. The main arc extends to a point about halfway between Alhucemas and Melilla. Mountainous terrain is found farther to the east, but its structure and lithology are different. The Rif chain is composed almost entirely of sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. Volcanism is evident from the eastern edge of the Nkour Valley to the Algerian frontier. The largest volcanic feature is Adrar Gurugú (886 meters), a composite cone of basalt and andesite behind Melilla. A number of smaller cones dot the plains of Garet and Gal'aya, and the promontories at the bay of Alhucemas and the Melilla peninsula are formed of trachyte and andesite. A large part of Gal'aya and Garet was submerged in Tertiary time. This lowland area includes the flattish plains of recent alluvium extending inland from Nador, and hill sections formed by recent stream dissection of Tertiary and Pleistocene sediments. The small range of Ikibdhanen appears to be an anticline. This range and the Kar-Kar highland were formed prior to the period of Rifian orogeny.

The Three Coasts

Most of northern Morocco is isolated by the Rif mountains and the inhospitable Mediterranean coast. The Atlantic façade, even more hostile to maritime life, has been the country's best rampart. Since these two shores are of little value, the coast facing Gibraltar has played a preponderant role.

Straight and shelterless, the Atlantic façade is indented only by mediocre harbors and poor estuaries. A series of marine terraces, mostly of Pliocene or Miocene age, dominates the littoral from Arcila to Larache. Quaternary dunes line the coast from Larache to and beyond the old interzonal frontier. The plain of Wad Lukkus is the largest zone of alluvial soil on the Atlantic coast and the only area in northern Morocco where agriculture is almost entirely mechanized. The small coastal plain on the frontier between the former Spanish and international zones is poorly drained and swampy most of the year.

Cliffs of Cretaceous or Eocene sandstone line the Strait of Gibraltar from Cape

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

[3] The best description of this area appears in the log of the excursion sponsored by the Société de Géographie du Maroc in March, 1957; see *Notes Marocaines*, 9–10 (1957), 43–46.

[4] I use the Berber *adrar* rather than the Moroccan Arabic *jbil* because this peak is in an area of Berber speech.

[5] I am omitting the pre-Rifian foothill zone, immediately south of the area shown on the maps. For a description of that zone see Maurer, *op. cit.*, and Jean Dresch, *Essai sur l'évolution du relief dans la région prérifaine* (Paris: Larose, 1933).

7: Mikesell K-4,5 (1955-1957) 1961 MX3 Rif MX3

Spartel as far as the western flank of Jbil Musa. Today this coast commands one of the world's great trade routes. For the Ancients the Pillars of Hercules marked the end of the known world, the very limits of civilization. In medieval time the Arabs rarely ventured into the Atlantic, and in the great age of exploration the Occidental Muslims limited their activity to piracy. For Morocco this coast has been a bond with Spain. By this almost terrestrial function the Strait of Gibraltar assumed a decisive role in Moroccan history. It was to guard the southern flank of Betica that Emperor Claudius created the province of Mauritania Tingitana in A.D. 46. The proximity of the two shores allowed Islam to conquer the Iberian peninsula, and the Spanish, in turn, to extend their influence to the Moroccan coast.

On the Mediterranean coast Morocco faces the great highway of civilization, but that shore, almost completely devoid of shelter, has never had an important maritime activity. A few fishing boats operate on calm days, but their sole function is to carry nets and seines a short distance beyond the surf. No road or trail of any significance follows this coast. Immediately east of the delta of Río Martín (Wad Martil) the coastline consists of a series of high cliffs cut by deep barrancas (pl. 1, *a*). This pattern, except for the small coastal plain formed by the deltas of Wad Ghis and Wad Nkour, continues as far as Melilla.

Climate

The climate of northern Morocco is of the Mediterranean type. In its simplest form this type of climate is characterized by (1) concentration of precipitation in winter and spring, the summers being nearly or completely dry; (2) warm to hot summers and mild winters; and (3) a high percentage of the possible sunshine for the year. From the Atlantic coast eastward to about 4° west longitude, irrigation is unnecessary for cereal crops. Within this zone the average annual precipitation ranges from 400 mm. to more than 1,000 mm. The extent of this range reflects the extreme contrasts of exposure and elevation. The drier zone, with precipitation totals of 400 mm. or less, begins on the eastern edge of the Rif chain.

Figure 6 was compiled from published records of forty-five weather stations for the decade 1946–1955. The former date is the earliest that can be used if conditions in the entire zone are to be compared. The records of a few stations extend to earlier years, and the Catholic Mission in Tangier has recorded weather observations since 1912. But data have become available for the interior of the zone only since the end of the Second World War.[1]

Precipitation decreases from north to south on the Atlantic coast, and from west to east on the Mediterranean coast. Tangier, with 810 mm. (31.9 in.), is the wettest coastal station in the zone. At Arcila, only 40 km. to the south, the total is 611 mm. (24 in.). On the Mediterranean coast, Ceuta with 560 mm. (22 in.) contrasts with Wad Lao with 460 mm. (18.1 in.), Puerto Capaz with 330 mm.

[1] For observations recorded prior to 1944, see *Resumen de las observaciones meteorológicas efectuadas en la zona de Marruecos hasta 1944* (Tetuán: Imprenta del Majzen, 1946). The years 1944–1946 are covered in a supplement published in 1947. Since the latter date, weather records have been published monthly in the *Boletín Mensual Climatológico del Servicio Meteorológico en Marruecos* (Tetuán: Imprenta del Majzen). For data on precipitation elsewhere in Morocco see *Atlas du Maroc*, Planche 4 *a*, "Précipitations annuelles" (Rabat: Comité de Géographie du Maroc, 1958), and the "Notice explicative" that accompanies the map.